CHAPTER 9

Recalling violence: gender and memory work in contemporary post-conflict Peru[1].

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Introduction

Between October and December 2014, a play called *La Cautiva/The Captive* was staged in a theatre in one of Lima's wealthy districts. The play tells the story of Maria Josefa, a 14 year-old Andean girl who, sometime during the 1980s, wakes up in the morgue of a military base. Maria Josefa insists in telling her story to the assistant doctor who is tasked with preparing Maria Josefa's dead body to be raped once again by those who have first raped and killed her. The captive and the assistant embark on a narrative journey through the big themes of Peru's memory battles: who is really innocent, who is really guilty, what is cruelty and what is justice, what is just silence and when does silence become complicity (Bacigalupo 2013).[2] The story is art and imagination, of course, but it is based on the experiences of those who testified before the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2001-2003).[3] Young girls like Maria Josefa were captured, tortured and gang raped, their dead bodies were attacked and mutilated.

The play received very strong support and reviews, and was well attended. According to one critic, *La Cautiva* was the very 'best political, historical, and poetic theatre of our times',[4] 'a play that does not make us watch a pornography of violence to raise awareness, but that subtly and poetically makes us question the "human condition, and Peruvian history"', according to another.[5]

I will use this play and its reception to raise a series of questions with regard to collective memory, symbolic reparation, and historical divisions in contemporary Peru – including divisions that run along socio-economic, racial and gender lines. I

am specifically interested in the memorial arts; cultural practices that help recognise and respect populations affected by certain gross violations of human rights. Within transitional justice discourses, such commemorative arts are seen as 'symbolic reparation'. Symbolic reparations may not replace economic reparations, nor criminal justice, but faced with the difficulties associated with both, the encouragement of more symbolic reparative processes would help underpin other transitional processes, and perhaps even provide more forward looking strategies of justice, or, a more transformative justice (Boesten and Wilding 2015).

The specific gendered characteristics of both war and transitional justice interventions demand a critical feminist perspective. The following analysis of gender and memory work in contemporary Peru is very much grounded in the conclusions I drew in my previous work on sexual violence in war and peacetime Peru (Boesten 2014). First, manifestations of wartime violence and atrocity tend to take place along lines of existing inequalities and injustices, and sexual violence is a tool to forge and reproduce such inequalities. Hence, I see sexual violence as constitutive of gender per se, as well as of race and other divisions in society. This is not only a wartime strategy, but precedes it and continues afterwards. In addition, in Peru, more than twenty years of attention to violence against women in policy and law have not done much to mitigate or end sexual or physical violence in conflict or peace.[6]

Secondly, I assume that – or wish to explore if - symbolic reparation, or memorial interventions, can not only generate empathy and respect, but potentially also question and unsettle known hierarchies. This could then be a tool for a form of gender justice that is more transformative, albeit less immediate. Transformative gender justice is here understood as the need, in periods of societal transition, to aim for the transformation of the underlying inequalities that provided the conditions in which specifically gendered harms were possible (Boesten and Wilding 2015). Repair is not enough, transformation is essential. The caveat to such an enquiry is that representations of atrocity are framed by political contexts and alliances, economic pressures and opportunities, and the capacity for mobilisation around a particular narrative (such as gender). Memorial arts tend to focus on specific audiences, and tell specific stories that can only be told in specific spaces and contexts; hence, not all such practices are necessarily reparative or transformative to those who might need it most. In addition, specific political opportunities (e.g., access to elites or resources)

are essential to memorial interventions being potentially transformative for broader society.

My main interest is to ask, how the gender of violence is represented in these hegemonic memory battles. I am looking for memory work that potentially unsettles existing hierarchies by forging change. Hence, I will examine the military-conservative narrative of violence through a gender lens, followed by looking at the gender politics in human rights based memory works. Lastly, I will look at 'bottom-up' narratives of violence. First however, I will set out what the 'memory battles' in Peru entail.

Remembering the Peruvian conflict

Between 1980 until the early 1990s an extremely violent 'revolutionary' group, Shining Path, terrorised the Peruvian countryside and later urban areas as well. The state took two years to respond to this violence, as it took place in what was largely seen as marginal, backward, remote areas of Peru. When it did respond, the military counterinsurgency was indiscriminate towards the local population, capturing, disappearing, torturing, massacring and raping local populations. A second revolutionary group entered the scene in the mid-1980s, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Party (MRTA for its initials in Spanish), plus local militias, or rural self-defence groups became increasingly involved as well. A civilian dictatorship led by Alberto Fujimori kept political fear and violence alive until the late 1990s, even when the Shining Path was largely destroyed after the capture of its leader in 1992. In 2001, after the spectacular public dismantling of the authoritarian and corrupt Fujimori regime, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) laid bare what had happened, writing a history of twenty years of conflict based on 17,000 interviews, estimating that about 69,000 Peruvians, largely of indigenous descent, had been killed. As we will see, this history is not yet in the past, justice has not yet been done, and there is no single collective narrative that can be told to contemporary generations. There still is too much at stake.

The TRC found that while Shining Path was the main culprit of the 69,000 people who were killed and disappeared in the war, the army and police were the main perpetrators of the thousands of rapes that took place (TRC 2003). Women were raped and tortured as part of an army-led counterinsurgency campaign against the local population as well as used and abused for sexual consumption and

entertainment.[7] While some victim-survivors have now received reparations for their suffering, neither the military nor the state have admitted culpability, neither has issued an apology, and no perpetrators have been convicted for rape. Only one case against ex-military is currently on trial, thirty years after the events, and after fifteen years of preparing the case. The outcome is uncertain. In such a context in which little redress is offered, any interventions in the public space to highlight the plight of victim-survivors of conflict-related sexual violence are essential in order for this story to be told as a form of recognition, symbolic reparation, awareness raising, and a continuous demand for justice on the part of some women. This is particularly relevant if we take into account the persistent high levels of non-conflict related sexual violence and the continuous impunity with which this is met. The state is complicit, and needs to be held to account if change is to be forged.

Back to *La Cautiva*, a play about such rape –and hence, an example of memorial art. The play generated heated debate at high political levels, as it touched unhealed wounds. In fact, the Ministry of Interior ordered the police and prosecutor to investigate the play for 'apology for terrorism' just a month after the play closed. Two days later, after widespread protest and ridicule, the investigation was dropped. The move was emblematic of the alliance between armed forces –the police in this case-, the government –the Ministry of Interior, whose minister of the moment was implicated in historical violations of human rights, and the judiciary, working together to undermine those who report, denounce and condemn human rights abuses perpetrated by the state. It was also a sign of internal fragmentation: the Ministry of Culture immediately pronounced *against* the accusation.

This controversy around *La Cautiva* does not stand on its own, and, as I will highlight further below, was not about the acts of rape per se, but should be seen in light of on-going memory battles around specific commemorative sites. These 'memory battles' have been understood as divided between a military-conservative community on the one hand, and a human rights community on the other (Drinot 2009).

The military-conservative community sees the history of violence not as an internal conflict, and less so a civil war –as the TRC would have it- but as a 'fight against terrorism', or counterinsurgency. In this view, the state armed forces fought against and defeated the terrorist threat against the population. Any human rights violations were collateral damage, or incidents. The human rights community, in

contrast, following the report of the TRC, sees the history of violence as an internal conflict between groups such as Shining Path and the state armed forces, and deems the state's response to the violence initiated by Shining Path as harmful and escalatory. In this interpretation, the causes of violence have to be sought beyond Shining Path and look inwards, to the entire society and how it reproduces and maintains structural inequalities prevalent in Peruvian society. According to Paulo Drinot (2009 p.26):

> this interpretation posits that if violence occurred it was not because, in their essence, the senderistas were violent but rather because, in its essence, Peru is violent. In other words, what differentiates these two discourses is the identification of the individual social body (albeit limited to the senderistas) or the collective social body (extensive to all Peruvians) within which resides the source of violence.

As we will see below, the collective 'culpability' leads to a class-based inward looking form of memorialisation, to some extent both essential and superfluous to 'all Peruvians'.

The human rights community –NGOs and civil society organisations, often supported by international organisations, leftist intellectuals, artists and scholars- has taken forward the project of the TRC to expose and seek justice for abuses committed during the conflict, especially those perpetrated by the state armed forces. The focus on the armed forces as perpetrator of human rights abuses, as opposed to a focus on the Shining Path or MRTA, is because that is where accountability lacks, while terrorists were largely killed or imprisoned. The victims in such cases are often (but not always) separated from human rights advocates by class and racial background, although non-governmental organisations, or NGOs, do work with victim organisations.[8] The TRC, in its recommendations, activities, and publications, also emphasised the need for actively constructing a collective memory that could empathise with victim populations otherwise largely invisible due to the race and class-based hierarchal organisation of society. Visibilisation and remembering would contribute to avoid repetition of past atrocities: a call for 'never again'. But, grounded in the idea that the causes of the violence reside in the collective body of Peruvians – and not in any individual body such as individual perpetrators, or Shining Path, or the army as an institution- an active participation in constructing collective memory is also a collective exercise in atonement, as Drinot observes (2009 p.19).[9]

By 2015, there were numerous memory projects that broadly drew on this human rights narrative of violence; from local museums exhibiting the memories of those who were disappeared or killed, to art from a younger generation reflecting on this history of violence through literature, visual arts, theatre, and activism. These projects explicitly use memory works with the intention or belief that this creates a more solidary, democratic, and inclusionary community. And, not surprisingly, this creates resistance from those who feel excluded from or even attacked by that project, as well as from the narrative itself.

The answer to those feelings of exclusion has been vandalism and a lack of governmental support for memory projects, especially apparent in the ambiguous and shifting support for the *Lugar de la memoria* (Place of Memory, or LUM) in Lima, as well as multiple vandalisations of the monument *El ojo que llora* (The Eye that Cries).[10] Neither of these memory projects exclude military victims, however, they do explicitly recognise victims of the military as well. For some supporters of the more conservative-military narrative of violence, the exposure of human rights violations perpetrated by the state armed forces is an affront to what they see as a heroic, or at least necessary, counterinsurgency. The attack on the makers of the play *La Cautiva* fits in this tendency to sabotage memory projects that explicitly expose state violence.

Beyond the sabotaging of undesirable memory works by allies and supporters of the military-conservative narrative of violence, the Peruvian armed forces are increasingly presenting a counter-narrative of violence using the same human rights language to undermine accusations of violations of human rights (Milton 2015). Several memorial displays were established, thereby contributing to the shaping of historical memory about what happened during the years of violence. The understanding of the past on display –what Cynthia Milton calls 'salvation' or 'heroic' memory- emphasise legitimate violence in service of the nation against illegitimate violence, or terrorism. The military did what it had to do to save the nation; no human rights violations were committed to harm innocents and any violations were part of a legitimate battle. Such a narrative is supported and reinforced by military and ex-military and their families, as well as by neoliberal elites and conservative sectors of the Church. This is politically a very influential sector of society, and is juxtaposed to the human rights narrative of the recent past.[11]

Enduring and deserving: military perspectives and *Memories of an unknown soldier*

The two military museums in Lima that Cynthia Milton examines in her work show an emphasis on the heroic nature of the counterinsurgency, displayed through highlighting high-profile victories such as the capture of the leader of Shining Path, Abimael Guzman in 1992, and the liberation of hundreds of hostages from the Japanese Ambassador's residency in 1997, held there by MRTA militants for four months (Milton 2015). Milton gives us a tour through these displays, telling us how the military and police reframe a narrative of human rights violations, as detailed by the Truth Commission and subsequent memory and justice work. Unsurprisingly, trusting Milton's tour, there is no reflection about the gendered nature of violence or memory in this conservative-military memory project, but that does not make it less 'gendered'. A military-masculine narrative erases human rights abuses in favour of heroic men who did what they did "for Peru". Any human rights violations committed by the counterinsurgency were either justified, or the result of mistakes and bad apples. Hence, in this narrative, sexual violence was the result of hardworking and enduring soldiers in need of sexual release, and sometimes 'accidents' happened and errors were made, as confirmed by military leaders to the TRC.[12] A gender binary of strong, masculine, and deserving men versus weak and undeserving women emerges. Women –especially indigenous women- were 'temptations', not victims. In such a narrative, it becomes very difficult to include a gender perspective that would provide any gender justice, that would help transform gender relations, or one that might provide some form of symbolic repair.

But memory is made up not only of official statements such as military museums; rather, it feeds *on* and *in* bottom up reflections on the past. As such, these narratives evolve and are and will be shaped by on-going engagement with both collective and personal memories of the violent past. In 2012, a book came out that took an entirely different perspective from the 'official' voices of state, military, or educated and urban middle classes: a Peruvian anthropologist, studying in Mexico, published an autobiography called *Memorias de un soldado desconocido* -memories of an unknown soldier (Gavilán 2012). The author, Lurgio Gavilán, tells his own story as a child in 1980s Andean mountains, when he became a member of three 'totalitarian institutions', as Carlos Iván Degregori calls it in his prologue to Gavilán's book, in a span of about 10 years. First, Gavilán tells about his experience as a child

soldier for Shining Path when he voluntarily joins them following his brother. Gavilán tells this story as an un-political and largely organic decision of a child living in poverty and violence, without much choice to do otherwise. When the child Lurgio is left for dead by his *compañeros*, the military picks him up, and, instead of killing or imprisoning him, the military takes the boy in, brings him back to health and educates him before deploying him as a soldier. Finally, Gavilán feels the call of religion and enters a Catholic convent, the third of Peru's 'totalitarian institutions'. The text is in many ways interesting, and was extensively discussed and studied in Peru. Gavilán sheds light upon the military perspective, and allows a peak into the daily life of soldiers. He humanises the military by not portraying them as heroic per se, but as young men fighting terrorism under difficult circumstances.

My interest is in how Gavilán speaks about both masculinity and sexual violence in his narrative. The boy Gavilán enters Shining Path when he is twelve, and is fifteen when he is picked up by the army. In the army the boy is fed and kept warm –necessary in a very harsh climate with little food- and allowed to go to school. He is grateful, but violence is still the rule. Sex as well. In his memoire, Gavilán speaks about soldiers' sexual needs, satisfied using llamas and donkeys in places where women do not come, using 'prostitutes' in villages where girls are on offer, and 'special needs' are satisfied by extreme violence, gang rape, and indeed, rape of the young soldiers themselves. The latter is an untold story in need of further research. But we knew about prostitution and forced prostitution in conflict zones, although the difference between voluntary and forced is not always clear-cut. Gavilán's testimony indicates why coercion and consent are blurred: soldiers and their superiors believed that young women in villages were just available –either you pay them, or you don't. Songs sung by soldiers, and reproduced in the book, testify to the entitlement with which soldiers approached local girls. Gavilán himself also speaks with some pride, and in a later response, with some regret, about soldiers 'needs'. [13] The author recalls that sex workers –his term- were sent to military bases by superiors, were checked by health care workers, and paid for their services. Such regulated sex work is another history still in need of writing. But Gavilán also suggests entitlement, 'availability' of local girls, and soldiers courting young girls.

These latter are particularly ambiguous stories of what I would call forced prostitution, recorded also through testimonies given to the TRC; and I have written extensively about such practices (Boesten 2009, 2014). This is the type of abuse that

is most blurry in terms of justice, reparations, or even solidarity and empathy, as the boundaries between coercion and consent are contested by witnesses, perpetrators, and indeed the judiciary. Gavilán writes about the systematic abuse of young women in captivity, the gang rape, the cruelty, the torture and killing in a, according to some observers, anecdotal manner which fails to denounce.[14] Gavilán himself states that telling is denouncing, and after all this is testimony, not confession nor dissent. In such a way, while the narrative follows a known military narrative in which sexual violence perpetrated by soldiers is normalised through a narrative of the needs and desires of military men, plus the inevitability of wartime collateral damage, the fact of telling is in itself transgressive. Underlying this narrative there is a more complex story, elements that do break the gendered binary –such as soldiers' experiences as both victim and perpetrator, stories of hazing, violence and rape against new recruits, peer pressure to rape, or the author's own involvement in gang rape or abuse. Gavilán hints at such experiences, but leaves them as yet under the surface. It would be interesting to know what conversations Gavilán's testimony could generate among veterans and their families.

Human rights, rape and class-based introspection: *La cautiva* and *La hora azul*

An understanding of conflict-related sexual violence and abuse as the result of soldiers' 'legitimate' desires and collateral damage helps understand the military's intention to investigate the play *La Cautiva* for 'apology of terrorism'. The play suggests systematic abuse of young women, and cruelty –the 'innocent' girl is not only raped, but her dead body is being prepared to be raped again. In the military's narrative this did not happen, or at least, not on a systematic scale, so the narrative must be resisted, investigated and even brought to court.

In its response to the accusations from the Ministry, police, and prosecutor, the cultural establishment in Lima defended the makers of *La Cautiva* on the basis of cultural freedom, not on the basis that the play rightfully denounced the military's systematic rape of young women. The subject of rape was hardly mentioned, and if at all, certainly not in a way to denounce the perpetrators. Strategically, this was a smart move, as it made it possible for the conservative-military alliance to drop the charges. But consequently, *La Cautiva*, despite its nominal recognition that sexual violence perpetrated by the military was widespread and normalised during the war years, cannot provide symbolic reparation to the victims nor unsettle gender norms. Where

Gavilán portrays sexual violence as lamentable but ultimately, collateral, *La Cautiva* uses sexual violence as an anecdote to bridge broadly shared feelings of guilt and disempowerment towards all innocent victims of human rights violations. The young dead girl being prepared for another round of gang rape provides the symbol of innocence: she is the girl in school uniform and later, in her white *quinceañero* dress. In addition, she is already dead, hence, even the accusation of being the daughter of Shining Path members cannot stick to her as a legitimation for rape. Not only a rape victim, the fifteen year old Maria Josefa represents *all* those who were not able to defend themselves against indiscriminate violence; she is the innocent victim. In the debates in the media that ensued the play, the brutality or injustice of rape is not necessarily questioned itself. The act of sexual violence itself is imaginable, it is the innocence of the dead body that seems to be the subject of the play.

There are other accounts of rape in post-conflict literature, but again, these seem to be side-issues to abstract questions of silence, guilt, complicity, and even redemption.[15] This is particularly evident in the 2005 novel *La hora azul*, written by eminent Peruvian author Alonso Cueto. The novel tells of a well-to-do Limeño lawyer who discovers that his deceased father, who was a professional military, had held a young girl for several weeks in his quarters when he was stationed in the highlands during the war. The father had let her escape –instead of killing her- suggesting, according to the author/son, that she was actually an *enamorada*, a lover, rather than a victim of rape and abuse. The son traces the girl, and her young son, possibly the protagonist's father's, in post conflict Lima and establishes a sexual relationship with the woman. He repeats his father's sins; but, instead of reflecting on the sexist and racist violence at the heart of these relationships -the son, and the author, and his critics, reflect on silence in relation to the war (how could I not have seen this?), guilt (why didn't I stop it?), and redemption (I am now approaching the victim and her son, and I will make good, with money and perhaps with love). One reviewer of the book even inferred a start of a reconciliatory process through this novel, instead of the sadist colonial desire it seems to reflect.[16] Strikingly, the image on the front cover of *La hora azul* shows the seductively-looking (mouth slightly opened, eyes directly into the camera) face of a young girl with indigenous features, telling us that this is a novel about an attractive young woman, not about violence and rape.[17] Considering the widespread praise –including a literary prize- the book received in Peru and beyond, we could argue that instead of providing any symbolic reparation, or even

recognition, to rape victims, the book actually harms the case for gender justice as it dismisses the victim's claims for any form of justice.

An important issue that emerges from both the example of *La hora azul* as well as from the play *La cautiva*, is that of class: these are cultural productions created by and for urban middle classes. These urban middle classes were themselves little affected by the violence, and if at all, mostly indirectly. The purpose of these productions, then, is raising awareness about the history of violence to younger middle class audiences, but also to deal with the feelings of guilt for not having seen nor having intervened in the tremendous violence experienced by other groups in Peruvian society: indigenous people, rural people, lower urban middle classes, women. These productions are not apologies and were not meant as such, as they are not directed at those groups who would deserve them, *they are introspective reflections on one's own blindness*. The fact that sexual violence, or the plight of women, is not at stake in these two productions (the novel and the play) should not surprise us then; it is the self-consciousness of the upper-middle classes that is at stake.

The victim-survivor narrative: Motherhood caught between two fires

Moving beyond urban middle classes and military narratives, what about memorial arts produced by victim-survivors? There is a large amount of arts produced by those directly affected by the violence of the 1980s and 90s, and that complement official memory work produced by the TRC and Lima-centred arts. There are those who use local artistic traditions to narrate histories of violence, such as *retablos* and *tablas de sarhua* –mainly wood paintings-, and songs such as *Huaynos* which not only record and observe, but also narrate specific interpretations of the violence.[18] The overall perspective that can be read in these memory works is one that emphasises a population caught between two fires –Shining Path on the one hand, and the military on the other. While reality was much more complex, showing a population that actively took and shifted sides and allies according to specific local interests and contexts, a 'caught between two fires' narratives helps erase or soften culpability and gives everyone –those who have to continue living together, sometimes in the same community- a claim on victimhood. This is also the narrative that can be read in the images produced by participants in a post-TRC, NGO-led, visual memory programme with affected communities in the Andes. [19] This

programme, Yuyarisun Memorial Art, asked rural people in the highly affected Andean departments of Huancavelica and Ayacucho to express their experiences in forms other than in written or oral testimony. The results are a collection of drawings, paintings, cartoons, songs and poetry testifying to the atrocities witnessed by their authors, and published in a collection called *Rescate de la memoria*.

There is not much direct reference to violence against women in the overall collection, but there are some that stand out. In a first image[20], from Huancaevlica, we see both the military and Shining Path killing, torturing, and taking away community members. The military can be identified by military uniforms and weapons. Shining Path members are dressed in black and wear balaclavas. Community members –no uniforms, hats customary among farmers, victimised- are on their knees, some bleeding, some hanging dead on a tree, one emaciated, amputated, and holding the Peruvian flag with a slogan 'for a Peru without violence'. The background to the image is dark mountains, fire, and slogans identifying the two terrorist groups: Shining Path and MRTA. In the forefront of the picture, we see a skeleton, lying underneath a dying child and we see a woman lying on the ground, her clothes ripped, breasts bare, legs wide, and bleeding. Soldiers hover above her. In the right hand corner, opposite the emaciated and amputated man, we see the head of a woman, her hand in front of her eyes, tears falling. The crying woman is also a mother: she has a knot under her chin referring to the cloth she has around her neck, in which babies are carried.

In this picture, rape is portrayed as one of many violences, and having many perpetrators. While central to the image, rape is also grouped alongside other atrocities; it does not stand alone, and is not shown to be an exception in this Huancavelican theatre of war. This reflects some testimonies presented to the TRC, where women would tell of the torture they underwent, in which sexual violence was but one element in long and horrid periods of terror. This image might be a reflection of this: sexual violence against women is not particular, but rather, should be seen as part of overall violence.

The second image from the Yuyarisun project I would like to discuss concerns the image that is reproduced on the cover of my book *Sexual Violence during War and Peace*. In this image, a series of atrocities are portrayed in blocks of experiences; we see systematic murder and rape, perpetrated by both Shining Path and Military agents, animals are slaughtered, and villages burnt. As in the previous image, rape

figures prominently, but is clearly shown as being part of overall atrocities perpetrated by both sides. Villagers are here also seen as those under attack, and there is a clear suggestion of their innocence: in the middle of the image, floating above the atrocities shown, there is a woman carrying a baby on her back, and a young child at her hand. They carry candles for light. The mother's gaze is haunted but fierce. The author places motherhood central as well as separate from the violence, symbolising the innocence of those caught in between. In both images, a mother is central – motherhood serves as an identity, and as a symbol of innocence, in an otherwise messy conflict with many perpetrators. The mother allows for a confirmation of the population as 'caught between two fires'.[21]

Motherhood is, of course, a tried and tested identity to collectively challenge state violence as well as in truth telling and memory construction (Jelin 2002): the best-known case is the activism of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, who challenged the violence of the state through persistent questions regarding the disappearance of their children. The symbol of the mother who searches for her children is a strong image: as they look for their children, they cannot be seen as political actors, as children are always innocent, mothers caring for them cannot but do so in innocence. Mothers and their children become politically untouchable. Although both mothers and children are also slaughtered and tortured in most theatre of wars, and certainly in the Peruvian conflict, this cannot be done in the public eye as it would lead to a de-legitimisation of a military that is 'heroically fighting terrorism and protecting the nation'. This idealization of mothers as politically innocent has fed into the power of motherhood as identity in public political resistance in the Southern cone, as well as in Peru (Kaplan 1982, Jaquette and Wolchik 1998, Eckstein and Garretón 2001).

In Peru, the use of motherhood as political identity for political activism finds its roots in networks of community-based organisations in which women organised basic services in light of state failure to do so. These *clubes de madres*, *clubes de damas*, and, *comedores populares* emerged especially in semi-urban areas where poor people tried to make a living and a home, often after migrating from rural to urban areas. Women would not only cook or organise childcare, but they would join national strikes and they would march in defence of their communities or their rights (Barrig 1988, Blondet 1996). During the years of violence, this experience was used to set up women's networks throughout neighbourhoods and provinces to help share

information, search for disappeared, and indeed, stage public protests against the political violence and economic austerity imposed on people (Barrig 1994, Coral 1998). One such organisation has survived the war years: the Association of Family Members of the Detained, Kidnapped and Disappeared, or ANFASEP. The organisation is led by a group of indigenous women who have lost family members. The main face of ANFASEP is a woman whose son disappeared into the military base and prison *Los Cabitos* in 1983. She is widely known as Mama Angélica, as her life revolved around searching, organising and campaigning for information about her son's disappearance. She was joined by other mothers also searching for loved ones, and today continue to campaign for the memory of their children.

ANFASEP is still an important actor in the construction of memory as well as in the fight for truth and justice. They are supported by urban and international civil society organisations and NGOs and are active in claiming sites of commemoration, such as *Los Cabitos*, the military basis in Ayacucho where hundreds of men and women were tortured, killed and either burned or buried. They have also constructed a museum, the *Museo de la Memoria* in Ayacucho, the first of its kind in Peru (followed by several others), opened in 2005 and facilitated by a German NGO. This museum is a testimony of the atrocities committed, especially those by the military, but also those by Shining Path. As Margarita Saona observes (2014), the museum does not advocate reconciliation, but is a call for justice: it exposes the violence against loved ones through a reconstruction of the oven in which people were burned, a mass grave with exposed bodies, and ropes used in torture; there are pieces of clothing recovered from dead bodies, and pictures and notes from those who disappeared. The women of ANFASEP are reporting and denouncing what armed actors did.

However, there is also a loud silence in the women's denunciation: there is no reference to sexual violence in these displays. Considering it is largely the work of women who lived through the conflict in Ayacucho, this might be surprising. The sexualised violence perpetrated against women, including women connected to ANFASEP, is, if not plainly denied, then at least obscured in the presented narrative. Instead of narrating such highly personal and intimate violence, ANFASEP reproduces the image of the mother-witness: strong survivors of war, suffering because of the loss of loved ones, brothers, sons, and husbands (Tamayo 2003 p.109, Jelin 2002). In doing so, the museum also narrates the heroic nature of the resistance

of the women, thereby subverting the masculine heroic narrative of war and violence (Saona 2014 p.111). Such subversion helps shift emphasis and undermines the legitimacy of male violence. At the same time, women's collective action against organised violence also conforms to the idea that women are naturally more peaceful, and men naturally more violent. In that sense, such activism, however important in countering the legitimacy of violence, also confirms and entrenches gendered stereotypes.

Conclusion: Gendered memory work and symbolic reparation

Perhaps we should then conclude that these contemporary representations of the violent past reproduce the basis of gendered inequality instead of unsettling them: these are narratives that do not denounce or debate violence against women, but use gendered images to claim innocence, suffering, and peacefulness, or they are used to express the tension between desire and violence, as in military narratives, or reconciliation and the need for redemption, as in the human rights narrative. Justice is not asked for harms done against women, but rather, for the harms done against either their roles as mothers and wives, or against their (sexual) innocence. This confirms what Janet Jacobs, examining Auschwitz memorials, also observed: the gendered narratives of trauma tend to reify traditional representations of women as either suffering mothers or sexual possessions of the perpetrators (Jacobs 2008).

This gender analysis of contemporary representations and narratives of the Peruvian conflict also highlights the limitations of memory work in general, and hence, symbolic reparations, in the Peruvian context. The fragmentation of society, whereby the main victims pertained to a specifically marginalised group with little economic or political power, limits the possibility for the emergence of nation-wide 'memory entrepreneurs', as Elizabeth Jelin called those who use memory work as political and economic capital (Jelin 2002). There is no quest for symbolic reparation on a national scale, as those who would deserve it do not have the political or economic capital needed to make such claims. Instead, there are different groups espousing different versions of the violent past, which are largely exclusive of each other. Alongside the two main narratives operating within the contemporary political economy of national memory work, the human rights and the military-conservative narratives, increasingly non-hegemonic narratives emerge from the shadows. Such

narratives –such as the memory of a Lurgio Gavilán, discussed above, as well as other memoires published in 2015[22]- undo, or at least question, clear boundaries between perpetrators and victims. The myriad of bottom-up local memories and histories being 'written' in the songs, art work, and stories of local memory entrepreneurs are also gaining ground as they are lifted into national and international (virtual) exhibition spaces and studies.[23] However, as yet, none of this allows for reflection on underlying gender dynamics.

In fact, there is little space for a subversive narrative that addresses inequalities and harms that run through all these narratives, which is what a transformative gender perspective would have to do. So to return to my initial question if memorial arts can contribute to transformative gender justice: perhaps they can, but the politics and the economics of memory seem to constrain the possibility for more inclusive and questioning memorial art that would unsettle gender binaries and address and denounce violence against women. There seems to be little space for questioning hierarchies, and it is not necessarily easier to question the racial or economic hierarchy as it is to question the gender hierarchy. To unsettle and question, memorial arts need to consciously engage with a much broader audience, and has to be explicitly political and forward-looking. They have to be tools to contest, challenge and debate to be transformative. In postconflict climates such as the Peruvian, where fragmentation along (broadly) lines of class, race and gender prevail, challenging these hierarchies seems impossible. A more feminist politics that could question such hierarchies is crowded out by other political and economic hierarchies that dominate the debate. And perhaps that is the problem with the technical idiom of 'symbolic reparations' on the one hand, and the practice of establishing monuments and memorial sites that foment and reflect specifically contested narratives of the past, on the other: they tend to squeeze out any claims based on gender, or, more broadly, any political projects aiming to transform hierarchies.[24]

Faced by the continuous high levels of conflict-related sexual violence in the world, as well as by high levels of peacetime violence against women in postconflict societies as well as elsewhere, we have to continue to discuss ways into more transformative forms of gender justice that question and challenge existing hierarchies and understandings. To do so, as scholars, we need to ask what symbolic reparation actually means; how alliances can be forged between the privileged and the marginalised in order to create political, economic and social spaces to speak, listen

and be heard; how such alliances could work without imposing a limited view of suffering; how memories of pain can be mobilised to advocate change; and, most importantly, how a feminist project of transformative gender justice can be advocated using memorial art as a critical intervention, rather than a representation of suffering.

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[1] I am grateful to the editors of this volume, Lucy Fiske and Rita Shackel for inviting me to their 2015 workshop that formed the basis of this collection of papers, and the participants of that workshop for rich discussions about transformative gender justice. Independently of that event, Alexandra Hibbett provided sharp comments on my contribution for which I am very grateful. Needless to say the result is entirely mine.

[2] With thanks to Cynthia Milton for facilitating access.

[3] The report is online via www.cverdad.gov.pe

[4] Eduardo Adrianzen, via facebook, Cited in: Jack Hurtado, 'Es la obra La Cautiva pro-terrorista?' *Diario16*, 13 January 2015. http://diario16.pe/noticia/56537-es-obra-la-cautiva-pro-terrorista

[5] Patricia del Rio, 'La bella y la bestia', *El Comercio*, 6 Nov 2014. http://elcomercio.pe/opinion/rincon-del-autor/bella-y-bestia-patricia-rio-noticia-1768471

[6] Recent mass mobilisations around gender based violence in Peru, and indeed in Latin America more broadly, have put the debate on sharp, with powerful conservative opposition orchestrating a backlash against gender equality. As such, the battle to end violence against women, and indeed, gender equality, always seems a two-steps forward –one-step back process. Panel 'Ni Una Menos: Avances y Desafíos en America Latina', Latin America Studies Association Annual Conference, Lima, April 2017. For an analysis of policy achievements and challenges, see: Boesten, *Sexual Violence during War and Peace,* 121-146.

[7] As I outline in my book *Sexual Violence During War and Peace*, the state armed forces used a range of rape regimes facilitated by the conflict, but not all unique to the conflict. Rape was certainly used as a weapon of war, but was also perpetrated opportunistically.

[8] For an analysis of the complex and mutually shaping relationship between national and international NGOs on the one hand, and victim organisations on the other, see: de Waardt 2014.

[9] Arguably, this has created an introspective process, rather then a process of recognition and respect.

[10] The *Lugar de la memoria, la tolerancia y inclusion social (LUM)*, a national museum to remember, funded by the EU and by the German government, has received little support from the current and previous governments, and its position and future seems precarious. Arguments over who is in charge, under which Ministry, and with what purpose are continuous. El ojo que llora, a monument in a central Limeño park designed and made by the Lima-based artist Lika Mutal, was several times vandalised by supporters of the Fujimori clan, see: Drinot 2009.

[11] These divisions are also currently being played out in the response to mining conflicts in the country –with a neoliberal, conservative sector responding to social unrest by militarising social protest, and hence, making things potentially much worse, and a human rights community using the law, democratic consultation, and support for the underdog (rural communities protesting infringements on their land) to defend human rights. Hence, these memory battles are not only backward looking, are not irrelevant to contemporary generations, and cannot be relegated to the past.

[12] According to Colonel Raul Pinto Ramos, his subordinates may have made minor mistakes when stationed in the high Andes during the 1980s, because of the temptation of 'so many things'. Cited in Boesten 2014 p.30. Statements by (ex) military are littered with references to the sexual availability of young indigenous girls, further examined in chapter 2 of my book cited above.

[13] Lurgio Gavilán, 2015. 'El mito de la comunidad innocente', https://lurgio.lamula.pe/2015/05/06/el-mito-de-la-comunidad-inocente/lurgio/ [accessed June 2015].

[14] Idem. Agüero calls Gavilán's manner of speaking about such atrocities as 'mere anecdotal', while Gavilán responds that telling is denouncing.

[15] See Alonso Cueto's *La hora azul*, discussed in Boesten 2014, chapter 3, and by Vich 2014. Of course, the imagery presented by local populations in the project Yuyarisun, see the cover image of my book, do so as well.

[16] See Peruvian author Ivan Thays: http://notaszonadenoticas.blogspot.co.uk/2006/01/viaje-vertical_26.html; and also: http://mate-pastor.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/ivan-thays-sobre-la-comida-gastronomia.html

[17] A recent film loosely based on the book, *Magallanes*, does recognise that this is about wartime rape and abuse, which the book only does half-heartedly.

[18] Such memory works are studied in, for example: Gonzalez 2011, Milton 2014, del Pino and Yezer 2013, Saona 2014.

[19] The project Yuyarisun, managed by the Servicios Educativos Rurales (SER) was published in 2006. The website unfortunately does not work anymore.

[20] Anonymous. Archive Yuyarisun, SER, unavailable. Image can be requested with the author.

[21] This is an important image that challenges what actually happened in those years, as research by scholars and the TRC point to a much more complex reality, whereby alliances shifted, old conflicts escalated, and victims were perpetrators and vice versa. This is what the anthropologist Kimberly Theidon (2013) called *intimate enemies*: few people were caught in the middle, most people in the centre of the conflict were one way or another responsible for the violence as well as victimised by it.

[22] Two specific memoires came out this year: Agüero 2015, concerns the reflections of the son of Shining Path militants, both killed during the war; Gálvez Olaechea 2015 contains essays written by one of the main leaders of the MRTA. Gálvez spent 27 years in prison before being released in May 2015.

[23] See for example: Milton 2014 and Denegri and Hibbett 2016.

[24] As referred to in Brown 2014.

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